



# FEMA

March 22, 2007

DR-1689, NR 001

*Contact:*

FEMA – News Desk (626) 431-3180

Lynne Carrier (832) 851-3419

OES – News Desk (916) 845-8400

Carol Singleton

# Disaster News

## **FEMA Teams Visit Counties; Disaster Office Opens in Pasadena**

PASADENA, CA – FEMA announced Thursday, March 22, 2007, that it opened its headquarters in Pasadena for the newly-declared disaster covering job losses from crop freezes in 12 California counties.

Justo Hernandez, the federal coordinating officer for FEMA’s recovery operations in the affected areas, said “eight teams of community relations experts were deployed to begin meeting with local and state officials, and farming community organizations in the central and southern California counties affected by the January crop freezes”.

At the request of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, FEMA Director David Paulison announced the Presidential disaster declaration on March 13. The declared counties are Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Los Angeles, Monterey, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura.

“We are pleased to have FEMA in the field working with us to help those whose lives have been impacted by the January freeze,” said Governor’s Office of Emergency Services Director Henry Renteria. “FEMA’s Disaster Unemployment Assistance program and support of our food banks is a tremendous compliment to the efforts Governor Schwarzenegger has taken to help the farm worker community recover from this disaster.”

According to Hernandez, persons who lost their jobs or lost self-employment business because of the crop freezes between Jan. 11-17, 2007, may be eligible for federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance. They and their families also can receive federal food commodities distributed through local food banks, Hernandez explained. Workers who were not eligible for California’s regular unemployment insurance payments may qualify for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. The maximum benefit is \$450 per week for up to 26 weeks. In order to receive State or Federal

unemployment assistance, workers must be able to demonstrate a legal right to work in the United States.

Workers must apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance through the state's Employment Development Department (EDD). Individuals can reach EDD by phone at 1-800-300-5616 (English); 1-800-326-8937 (Spanish); or on-line at [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov). Unemployed workers can also apply for assistance at any of the 20 One-Stop Assistance Centers that Governor Schwarzenegger established in January. Locations can be found on the State's Freeze Web site at [www.oes.ca.gov](http://www.oes.ca.gov). Those who registered with EDD previously, but were denied payments should check back to find out if they can qualify under the federal program. The deadline for applications is April 13, 2007.

On Tuesday, Governor Schwarzenegger authorized an additional \$2.2 million for local food banks and \$1.5 million to provide financial assistance for freeze victims to make rent, mortgage, and utility payments. Since January, the State has provided more than \$4 million to local food banks, and \$3.25 million in aid to freeze victims.

*FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident, initiates mitigation activities and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA works closely with state and local emergency managers, law enforcement personnel, firefighters and other first responders. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.*

###